

## REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the presently pending claims. Currently, claims 1-92 remain pending in the present application, including independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77. Independent claim 1, for instance, is directed to a nonwoven material having meltblown fibers forming the first exterior surface of the nonwoven material, the meltblown fibers being present in an amount less than 8 gsm.

In the Office Action, claims 1-8, 10, 12-14, 16, 21-24, 27-41, 43-48, 50, and 52-76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,177,370 to Storey, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,177,370 to Skoog, et al. The remaining claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Storey, et al. in view of Skoog, et al., in combination with several other references. However, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not teach or suggest the presently pending claims.

As indicated in the Office Action, Storey, et al. does not disclose meltblown fibers being present in an amount less than about 8 gsm on the side of a nonwoven web. Skoog, et al. was cited to remedy this deficiency. The Office Action stated that:

[Storey, et al. and Skoog et al.] use meltblown layers of synthetic materials with the purpose of providing the wipes with low linting properties therefore it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the basis weight of the outer layers to be lower since SKOOG et al. has shown that layers with basis weight as low as about 3 gsm will also provide the low linting effect aimed by STOREY.

However, nowhere does Skoog, et al., describe linting properties of meltblown fibers, let alone linting properties in connection with the basis weight of meltblown fibers

applied to the exterior of nonwoven webs as required by the presently pending claims. Indeed, the present application is directed to materials having reduced lint and slough. A meltblown "veneer" is applied to at least one side of the material that has been found to greatly reduce lint and slough without substantially affecting the other properties of the material. See Col. 4, lines 25-29 of the present application. Such reduction in lint and slough results from the meltblown fibers forming the exterior surface of the materials.

Applicants respectfully submit that as Skoog, et al. does not disclose meltblown fibers forming the exterior surface of a nonwoven material, a tissue product, or a wet wipe, the basis weights identified for the meltblown layers of Skoog, et al. are of no consequence. Rather, the meltblown layers of Skoog, et al. are sandwiched between the fabric and spunbond web layers. The basis weight of such sandwiched layers would have no effect on reduction of lint and slough results because the layers themselves would be sandwiched between other materials. There would simply be no motivation to combine the basis weight of such sandwiched meltblown layers with the material of Storey, et al. to arrive at the presently pending claims.

Various dependent claims were also rejected as being unpatentable over the references discussed in detail above. Applicant respectfully submits, however, that at least for the reasons indicated above relating to corresponding independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77, the dependent claims patentably define over the references cited in the Office Action. However, Applicant also notes that the patentability of the dependent claims does not necessarily hinge on the patentability of independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77. In particular, it is believed that some or all of the dependent claims may

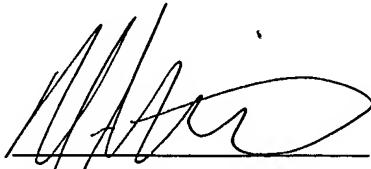
Appl. No. 10/748,454  
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Reply to Office Action of May 30, 2006

possess features that are independently patentable, regardless of the patentability of claims 1, 32, 55, and 77.

In summary, Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims patentably define over all of the prior art of record for at least the reasons set forth above. As such, it is believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Torres-Velazquez is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully submitted,  
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